UNITED NATIONS

CEDAW

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Distr.
GENERAL

CEDAW/C/SR.210
21 January 1993

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

Twelfth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 210th MEETING

Held at the Vienna International Centre, Vienna,
on Tuesday, 19 January 1993, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Ms. CORTI

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V.93 80739 4325E

Distr.: 22 January 1993

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES UNDER ARTICLE 18 OF THE CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN (continued)

Initial and combined second and third reports of Romania (continued) (CEDAW/C/5/Add.45 and CEDAW/C/ROM/2-3)

Article 11

1. Ms. BUSTELO GARCIA DEL REAL asked whether Romanian women had the same access to higher-level professional and administrative posts as men and whether the length of the working day was the same for all workers in Romania. Given that women had to assume responsibilities both in the workplace and at home, she wondered whether any data were available on the number of hours working women devoted to work in the home and whether the domestic work was shared with their spouses. Referring to Romania's ratification of the ILO Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), she observed that ILO placed strong emphasis on equal pay for work of equal value; she wondered whether any data were available on the implementation of Romanian legislation in that regard.

2. Ms. ILIC said that, while she welcomed the reduced child mortality rates believed to result from mothers spending longer periods at home, she wondered what happened in the meantime to the mother's career. Were they able to catch up, particularly if they remained at home for longer periods of time after having several children, or did they fall behind in promotion and technological development?

3. Neither of the reports contained information about women artists, journalists, writers and, in short, women who made a contribution to the cultural life of the country. Such information would be interesting, and she would like to see it included in Romania's next report.

4. Ms. MÄKINEN, referring to the principle of equal pay for work of equal value, wondered what job evaluation system existed in Romania. She also wondered whether women's pensions were lower than men's, in view of the fact that they retired five years earlier.

5. Ms. AKAMATSU asked for precise information regarding recent trends in the employment rates of men and women since 1989. There appeared to have been no great changes in employment legislation since the revolution. Under the old system, the rights of women workers appeared to have been clearly defined: had those rights become a reality or did they still exist only on paper?

6. Turning to the general prohibition of night work for women, referred to in the initial report (CEDAW/C/5/Add.45), and to the prohibition of night work for pregnant and breast-feeding women, referred to in the combined second and third reports (CEDAW/C/ROM/2-3), she asked for an explanation of those restrictions, which were tantamount to restrictions on women's employment.

7. The combined second and third reports made no reference to child-care facilities and she wondered whether there had been any change in policy with regard to crèches and kindergartens since the submission of the initial report.

8. Referring to trade unions, she asked whether there were sufficient women in the decision-making positions in the unions to represent all women workers and, if not, what policy existed to overcome that situation.

9. Ms. LIN Shangzhen asked whether the unemployment rate for women was rising or falling and what was the percentage of unemployed women in the total female workforce.

10. The reports made reference to legislation providing special protection for working women. Who bore the responsibility for such protection in the private sector and were there any difficulties in implementing such provisions? How much maternity leave were women allowed?

11. Ms. BRAVO NUÑEZ DE RAMSEY said that it appeared from the initial report that there was some job segregation according to sex, some work being regarded particularly as women's work. She wondered whether such differentiation still existed, given that it was not in line with article 11 (b) of the Convention.

12. Ms. NIKOLAEVA said that the reports appeared to contain no data which would indicate to what extent the ILO Equal Remuneration Convention was being implemented. Were there any figures available for men's and women's salaries, what was the trend in salaries over the past few years and how were salary levels reflected in women's standards of living?

13. Turning to the unemployment figures given in the combined second and third periodic reports, she asked whether unemployed women in the professional categories received unemployment pay and, if so, how much, and whether the rate of unemployment pay allowed women to maintain a minimum standard of living. Was any retraining available to alleviate the situation, how were women placed in new positions and how was retraining and re-employment financed?

Article 12

14. Ms. ABAKA asked whether immunization was available to babies, and if so whether it was provided free of charge. As neither of the two documents mentioned AIDS, she wondered whether any statistics were available and what preventive or educational measures directed at women existed in Romania. What were the major causes of female mortality and morbidity in Romania? Were any women's organizations involved in awareness-creation within family planning programmes?

15. Ms. MÄKINEN asked what contraceptive measures were available in Romania as an alternative to abortion?

16. Ms. AYKOR said that the report made no mention of the services available to women in relation to health issues such as family planning and reproductive rights. The pre-revolution Government appeared to have had a specific demographic policy in that regard, and she wondered what policy had been adopted by the post-revolution Government. What access did women have to family planning services? Did the medical assistance referred to cover all the services required by mothers and young children? Was abortion a recognized part of family planning, and how many abortions were performed in public and private clinics?

17. Ms. KHAN said that unofficial sources of information available to members of the Committee indicated that large numbers of children had been abandoned in Romania in recent years. Why were children abandoned despite the special assistance provided even before the revolution to pregnant women throughout their pregnancy and after the birth, and the various types of allowances currently available to children and mothers, and what measures were now taken to discourage the practice? Unofficial sources had also revealed that a large number of abandoned children suffered from AIDS. What measures were now taken in that regard and were any data available to show whether the abandonment of children was on the decrease or whether it remained at pre-revolution levels?

Article 14

18. Ms. BRAVO NUÑEZ DE RAMSEY observed that, while the initial report indicated that 60 per cent of the country's agricultural workforce was female, the combined second and third reports made no mention of agricultural work. She wondered whether women working on the land in Romania were assisted by their husbands and children in domestic tasks.

19. Ms. UKEJE said that she had had difficulties with the discrepancies between the initial report and the combined second and third reports. For example, the latter document, unlike the initial report, indicated that women in rural areas received lower retirement benefits than women in cities. It was argued that inequality reflected attitudes rather than discrimination. The distinction was difficult to grasp, but in any case, where attitudes resulted in differentiation, the Government had an obligation under the Convention to take steps to remedy the situation. Romania's next report should state clearly what steps had been taken to change attitudes and what effect those steps had had de facto and de jure on the lives of rural women as compared with urban women.

20. Ms. QUEDRAOGO asked for more information on how women participated in the national economy. Some comparison between rural and urban women had been given but real details were lacking; it was important to focus on the status of rural women in view of the fact that they were the core of the national economy in most countries. Information relating to their income levels would be particularly useful. Had development in Romania resulted in any benefit to them?

21. Ms. ABAKA, referring to the Government's plans to improve medical and educational services in rural areas, asked what was the current mortality rate among rural women compared with that of urban women and what percentage of rural women received ante- and post-natal care and family planning services compared with urban women. How many rural girls and women were enrolled in primary and secondary schools compared with girls and women in the urban communities?

Articles 15 and 16

22. Ms. KHAN asked how many cases of discrimination had been taken to court since Romania's ratification of the Convention.

23. Ms. AKAMATSU welcomed the information provided with regard to the provisions concerning the rights of women as citizens and considered that

the guarantees in the Constitution regarding freedom of movement were satisfactory. However, those rights appeared to exist only on paper. Turning to article 16, she said that the information concerning the choice of family name was very interesting. Were the provisions new or had they existed under the old regime, and what was the situation in practice?

24. Ms. MÄKINEN requested statistics on the incidence of violence in the context of the family and asked whether shelters were provided for battered women, and if so whether they existed in both rural and urban areas.

25. Ms. BRAVO NUÑEZ DE RAMSEY said that article 44 of the Romanian Constitution stated that "The family shall be based on marriage freely entered into by the spouses" (CEDAW/C/ROM/2-3, p. 17). She felt that Romanian law effectively discounted de facto relationships which had produced children. Recent data on the ages at which spouses married and statistics on the relationship between early marriage and divorce had not been included in the report and would be welcomed.

26. Ms. UKEJE requested clarification on the Government's attitude with regard to controlling population growth and on whether it would maintain the social security benefits introduced by the previous administration. Document CEDAW/C/ROM/2-3 ended on a pessimistic note, but it was important to remember that equality could only be ensured through sustained political will. It was to be hoped that, in its next report, the Government of Romania would be in a position to inform the Committee of improvements in the situation of women in Romania.

27. The CHAIRPERSON thanked the representative of the Government of Romania for the report, and stressed that it should not be discouraged by either the complexity or the volume of questions generated, as that was testimony to the concern of the members of the Committee to help improve the situation of women in Romania.

28. Ms. APATEANU (Romania) thanked the members of the Committee for the interest they had shown and the ideas they had put forward. The statistical information requested would be provided if at all possible, or the Committee would be referred to the relevant sources.

29. Ms. Apateanu, Ms. Uliescu and Mr. Voiculescu (Romania) withdrew.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS (continued)

30. The CHAIRPERSON said that a vice-chairperson from the African region had still not been elected. Following consultations, the name of Ms. Ukeje was proposed.

31. Ms. Ukeje was elected Vice-Chairperson by acclamation.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

32. Ms. CREYDT (Secretary of the Committee) introduced document CEDAW/C/1993/CRP.1/Rev.2, containing suggestions for the organization of the Committee's work.

33. The Committee agreed on the organization of work suggested in document CEDAW/C/1993/CRP.1/Rev.2.

Report of the pre-session working group

34. Ms. ABAKA, speaking as chairperson of the pre-session working group, introduced the group's report (CEDAW/C/1993/CRP.2). She said that the working group, which comprised five members of the Committee, had met from 11 to 15 January 1993 at Vienna. Ten meetings had been held, including three drafting sessions. The group's mandate had been to prepare lists of questions and issues for seven countries, namely Bangladesh, France, Nicaragua, the Republic of Korea, Rwanda, Sweden and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The working group had concentrated on a limited number of questions and focused on analytical and qualitative aspects and on achievements, remaining obstacles and matters in respect of which further information was required.

35. The report of the pre-session working group was approved.

Composition of the standing working groups

36. The CHAIRPERSON asked members of the Committee to indicate their preferences with regard to the composition of the standing working groups for the present session. The working groups would be open-ended and membership would be flexible. Members could attend meetings of either group and documents and draft proposals would be available to all members of the Committee.

37. After a brief discussion, the CHAIRPERSON suggested that Working Group I should comprise Ms. Gurdulich de Correa, Ms. Ilic, Ms. Lin Shangzhen, Ms. Mäkinen, Ms. Muñoz Gómez, Ms. Nikolaeva, Ms. Quedraogo and Ms. Tallawy, and that the members of Working Group II should include Ms. Abaka, Ms. Akamatsu, Ms. Aouij, Ms. Aykor, Ms. Bravo Nuñez de Ramsey, Ms. Bustelo García del Real, Ms. Cartwright, Ms. Corti, Ms. Forde, Ms. García-Prinz, Ms. Khan, Ms. Lin Shangzhen, Ms. Quintos-Deles and Ms. Schöpp-Schilling.

38. It was so agreed.

Terms of reference for the standing working groups

39. The CHAIRPERSON drew attention to rule 50 of the rules of procedure, according to which the Committee might "elaborate working methods to assist it in performing most efficiently its task of examining the reports of States parties and to consider the progress made since the entry into force of the Convention for them and since the submission of any previous reports".

40. Ms. CREYDT (Secretary of the Committee) thought that it would be advisable for consideration to be given to ways of improving the effectiveness of the consideration of reports, especially in view of the growing backlog. The holding of three-week sessions had budget implications that had to be taken into account. Working Group I should also consider the composition of the pre-session working group for the next session, and the Committee's contribution to the World Conference on Human Rights, to the Fourth World Conference on Women to be held in 1995 and to the International Year of the Family, 1994. Other matters to be taken up were: issues arising out of the

report of the fourth meeting of persons chairing the human rights treaty bodies (A/47/628); the programme of work for the next session; the provisional agenda for the next session.

41. Working Group II had the task of considering suggestions and general recommendations that the Committee might address to Governments. The working group might wish to examine the comments made by members of the Committee on various articles of the Convention, and recommend articles to be given special consideration at forthcoming sessions.

42. The CHAIRPERSON said that other subjects could be considered by the working groups in addition to the the points mentioned by the Secretary. The working groups had a heavy workload, and would meet during regular working time in order to take advantage of interpretation services.

IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 21 OF THE CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN (CEDAW/C/1993/4 and Corr.1)

43. Mr. MATHIASON (Deputy Director, Division for the Advancement of Women) said that implementation of article 21 of the Convention lay at the heart of the Committee's work in that it provided an opportunity for making comments of a general nature. The Committee had decided at its tenth session that during its current session it would make a general analysis of article 16 and other articles related to the family. It had also decided that it would discuss articles 7 and 8 at its thirteenth session. The Secretariat would welcome advance notice of the articles for examination at the Committee's fourteenth session in 1995.

44. Ms. CREYDT (Secretary of the Committee), introducing the report prepared by the Secretariat at the Committee's request (CEDAW/C/1993/4 and Corr.1), said that article 16, which required States parties to take appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations, covered more issues than any other article of the Convention and was closely related to articles 9 and 15, in particular, as well as articles 2, 5, 12 and 13. Reports by States parties over the years had helped to establish criteria to assist other Governments in the preparation of their reports, but the information provided by Governments was uneven because of different priorities due to cultural differences, different levels of development, and other factors; the Committee had to take those differences into account. The Secretariat's report reviewed compliance with articles 16, 9 and 15, all of which were related to equality in marriage and in family relations.

45. Such compliance was reviewed only in so far as the relevant information was provided in the reports submitted by States parties. The Secretariat's report concentrated on the constitutional, legislative and administrative provisions and other measures in force, restrictions or limitations by law or practice on the enjoyment of equal rights and the developments that had taken place since the preparation of the first reports. It also provided statistics in so far as they were available, and took into account the standards set in international instruments and the recommendations contained in the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women in so far as they might be of assistance in interpreting and commenting on specific rights.

46. The information provided by States parties covered a period of 10 years, from 1982 to 1992, and it should be borne in mind that certain problematic issues might since have been overcome and new laws might have superseded discriminatory ones. States parties had made considerable efforts to adapt their legal systems to international instruments and to the principle of non-discrimination on the grounds of sex; those efforts had resulted in law reform and new laws, and in many countries the process was continuing.

47. The terminology used by States parties was often inconsistent, with, for example, references to the legal equality of children born out of wedlock standing side by side with use of the term "illegitimate child". In some cases, reports revealed a conflict between laws within the same Constitution.

48. In order to reduce the general unevenness of reporting by States parties, the Committee might wish to propose specific indicators on which Governments would be asked to report with regard to article 16 of the Convention.

49. Ms. GARCIA-PRINZ said that if Working Group II were to make recommendations concerning such specific indicators, it would be helpful if the Secretariat were to determine those variables that were most important for reporting States parties to consider. If case histories were to be used as a method of work, more detailed reporting would be required, but it might be more useful to work with specific indicators, and States parties might be asked to provide information as to why they had chosen to mention specific case histories.

50. The CHAIRPERSON suggested that the Committee should suspend its consideration of the current item until the Secretariat's report (CEDAW/C/1993/4 and Corr.1) was available in languages other than English.

WAYS AND MEANS OF EXPEDITING THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

51. Mr. MATHIASON (Deputy Director, Division for the Advancement of Women) said that the Committee's methods of work were increasingly being viewed in terms of the human rights regime as a whole. The Committee was under certain constraints in dealing with the important issue of the backlog of reports, notably the constitutional limitation on meeting weeks, which had, exceptionally, been extended by the General Assembly for 1993 and 1994. The Committee had also been asked for its opinion on the question of reservations in relation to the process of implementation of the Convention. The Centre for Human Rights was well placed to provide information concerning the developments that had taken place with regard to methods of work in other treaty-monitoring bodies.

52. Ms. KLEIN (Centre for Human Rights) said that the Centre serviced six of the seven major human rights treaty and monitoring bodies, namely the Human Rights Committee (International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights), the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights), the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination), the Committee against Torture (Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment), the Committee on the Rights of the Child (Convention on the Rights of the Child), and - in respect of the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid - the so-called

"Group of Three" which met every two years as a body designated by the Chairman of the Commission on Human Rights from among States that were at the time both members of the Commission and parties to the Convention. Ratification of the Conventions had increased of late, ranging from 70 in the case of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment to 132 in the case of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. One of the most rapidly growing Conventions, adopted by the General Assembly in 1989, was that on the Rights of the Child, with 128 States parties.

53. The positive trend in respect of ratification had created problems for the monitoring bodies in dealing with reports. Their membership in the case of the Committee against Torture and the Committee on the Rights of the Child was 10, and in all other cases 18, and their method of election was the same as for the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. They also had a common mandate, namely to examine periodically reports by States parties.

54. The Human Rights Committee, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the Committee against Torture had an additional mandate, in that it was possible for individuals to make complaints if States parties had accepted an optional protocol or had made a declaration under a specific article of the Convention concerned. In the case of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 67 of the 115 ratifying States had accepted that procedure. In the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, where the individual complaints procedure did not exist, consideration had been given to having an optional protocol on some of the rights under the Covenant. Although it had not been in existence for very long, the Committee on the Rights of the Child was also considering the possibility of an optional protocol.

55. Some of the Committees also had a mandate to receive complaints from States directed against other States regarding alleged violations of some treaty provisions. They were usually based on voluntary acceptance of a provision of the treaty, except in the case of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, where the provision was obligatory. That procedure might come to be seen as a useful way of resolving inter-State disputes in an expert, factual manner without their being brought before political bodies.

56. One other specific mandate was that given to the Committee against Torture. When that body received indications that torture was practised in a country which had ratified the Convention, it was empowered to send one or more of its members to the territory of the country in question to investigate the allegations and report back to the Committee.

57. All the treaty bodies attached great importance to interpreting the articles of the various treaties concerned on the basis of their experience in considering the reports of the States parties. Like the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the Human Rights Committee formulated its general comments on that basis. The Centre for Human Rights in Geneva had recently published a document compiling all the suggestions, recommendations and general comments of the various treaty bodies.

58. All the treaty bodies were engaged in reflecting on their own methods of work. They were aware of the need to become more efficient themselves as well as the need to lighten the burden of the States parties required to submit periodic reports. One proposal for making the work of the reporting States easier was to establish consolidated guidelines for the initial part of periodic reports. In that way, a reporting State would be required to submit general information on its land and people and its constitutional and legislative provisions in regard to the subject in question only once. That would constitute the so-called "core document", which would be circulated whenever it submitted a specific report so that the information would not have to be repeated every time. After that, whenever there were changes in general procedures which affected the implementation of the Convention in question, the necessary information would be provided and the Secretariat would update the core document. Only about 20 such core documents had been received so far, from the 160 States which were parties to one or more of the seven human rights instruments, but, as they became aware of the advantages of the procedure, the number was expected to increase.

59. Problems common to the various treaty bodies were the failure of States parties in some cases to comply with their reporting obligations, and the steadily increasing backlog of reports. Efforts were being made to cope with the backlog: the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, like CEDAW, had been authorized to hold extra meetings. Various ways were being discussed of dealing with the problem of non-compliance. In some cases, not even initial reports had been received. One procedure was for the Secretary-General to send a formal reminder to the State concerned, inviting it to submit a report. In the Human Rights Committee, when periodic reports were two or three years overdue, it was the practice to designate one or more members to contact the permanent representative of the State party in default, in order to find out the reasons for the delay. In the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the practice had grown up of mentioning the defaulting States at the beginning of the Committee's report so that their names would be made known in the Economic and Social Council. The oldest treaty body, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, had found itself obliged to take still other measures, after a number of countries had failed to report after eight to ten years. That body had decided that its Chairman should address a letter to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the State concerned, saying that the country's periodic report had not been received for a number of years, inviting it to submit a report by a certain date, and informing it that, if the report was not received, the Committee would schedule an examination of the country's implementation of the Convention at its next session on the basis of information available from other sources. After putting the procedure into practice, the Committee had considered the situation in more than 20 countries, sometimes even in the absence of the State party. It had then transmitted the records of the meetings concerned to the State party and invited its comments. In some of the cases, the States parties contacted had sent representatives to the session to explain why they had been unable to report on time and to make oral comments. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights had decided, at its last session, to follow a similar procedure and, in the case of countries which had not even submitted an initial report, to consider the implementation of the Covenant on the basis of information received from other sources. The idea was that, when some States subjected themselves to international scrutiny by regularly submitting reports, the efforts of others to avoid doing so should not go unchallenged.

60. It would take time to assess the impact of those recent measures. However, all the monitoring bodies now wished to be provided with a variety of information in addition to the initial and periodic reports of States parties. For example, the reports made to CEDAW were important to the Human Rights Committee when it was called on to deal with reports under the Covenant concerning issues very close to those that were CEDAW's primary concern. The various treaty bodies therefore circulated their reports to each other and the Secretariat also tried to provide information received from other organizations and specialized agencies, or supplied by special rapporteurs or non-governmental organizations. Some years earlier, a number of treaty bodies had hesitated even to mention material from non-governmental organizations. The current trend, however, was to solicit their input and the recent meeting of persons chairing treaty bodies had found that, to ensure effective performance, it was essential that such information should be available.

61. Like CEDAW, most treaty bodies, when examining the periodic reports of States parties, found it advisable to have lists of issues prepared in advance in order to facilitate consideration. Some had found that such lists of issues were also useful for initial reports. Most treaty bodies had pre-sessional working groups, and two of them had found that it was advisable for those groups to meet two or three months before the main committee so that the list of issues could go to the States parties ahead of time. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights had used that procedure because of the wide variety of matters involved, and the Committee on the Rights of the Child because some of its special concerns had never been touched on before. The dialogue within the various bodies proceeded on the basis of the written and oral information provided by the States parties on the list of issues. In regard to the conclusions emerging from the dialogue, procedures differed. In some bodies, the members made individual comments, which were then summed up for each country involved by the chairman or rapporteur. It had not formerly been the practice for committees as a whole to make concluding comments or observations for follow-up by the States parties, but currently all the treaty bodies had adopted that procedure. The method used by the Human Rights Committee was the most structured. The individual comments were retained, but the Rapporteur also prepared a first draft of general conclusions and observations, which was circulated to all the members. After informal consultations, the Committee adopted the comments in closed session and they were sent by the Secretary-General, in the form of a note verbale, to the country in question. The comments consisted, first, of an introduction, followed by observations on the report itself, saying whether the guidelines had been followed and giving an account of the country's legislative measures and national practice. That was followed by a statement of the positive aspects that had emerged from the dialogue, noting any factors or difficulties that might have impeded the implementation of the Covenant, such as an emergency situation or special economic problems. Next was a statement of the principal issues of concern and, as a final heading, the Committee's suggestions and recommendations. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Committee on the Rights of the Child were currently using the same system. Other treaty bodies were still proceeding in a less structured way but would probably adopt the practice at a later stage.

62. There were also other developments in the form of follow-up to the consideration of reports. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights had recently decided to offer assistance to countries which had been unable to provide sufficient information on a major area of concern, by

sending one or two members of the Committee to look into the situation, provided, of course, that the country concerned accepted the offer.

63. In the case of the Human Rights Committee, a new procedure had evolved whereby, when the situation in a country warranted a report on a specific article of the Covenant at less than the normal five-year interval, the country concerned could be asked to submit an immediate report for consideration at the Committee's next session. The Committee had taken that course in the case of three countries. It had then been able to consider the reports within two or three months of making the request. Such a rapid procedure could well become a useful tool in future. The whole purpose of the treaty bodies was to help when particular rights were in danger of not being adequately implemented.

64. The CHAIRPERSON said that the description of the procedures of the other treaty bodies and the new experiments that were being tried would be very useful to the Committee. She was very interested in the importance now being attached to information from non-governmental organizations. She wondered whether other treaty bodies were able to inform Governments officially that they had received such information on specific matters.

65. Ms. ILIC said that it was well known that certain countries had made reservations to their ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women but had ratified the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights without any reservation. She asked how the Human Rights Committee dealt with that situation.

66. Ms. BUSTELO GARCIA DEL REAL asked whether the members of other treaty bodies asked questions on the reports they received or whether they chose particular articles of the treaty concerned for special questioning.

67. Ms. KLEIN (Centre for Human Rights) said that the information from non-governmental organizations was usually received in written form. It was provided to all members of the Committee in question but did not go automatically to the Governments concerned. A number of non-governmental organizations, however, made the information sent to committee members available to Governments in order to allow them to react to it. The Human Rights Committee in fact required any non-governmental organization which supplied information to it to provide it also to a representative of the State party. In a new trend, some treaty bodies asked the Secretariat to inform relevant non-governmental organizations that they were to examine certain countries at their next session and that they would like information on the countries concerned which members could use, or not use, at their discretion. The Secretariat was currently establishing country files that included information received from other treaty bodies, from other organs of the United Nations and from the specialized agencies, statistical data of various kinds, and information from non-governmental organizations.

68. In reply to the question about reservations, she said that the Human Rights Committee usually restricted its questioning to reservations to the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. It asked searching questions about the reasons for the reservations and their exact content and whether the State party intended to withdraw them at a later stage. In answer to the question about the way in which questions were asked, she said that nearly all the treaty bodies prepared lists of questions to which the representatives of

States parties replied. Additional questions were then raised by the experts, but procedures differed according to the body concerned. In the Human Rights Committee, a list was drawn up of major topics. After replies to the first topic, Committee members posed additional questions and the representative of the State party was invited to reply. The Committee on the Rights of theChild followed the same procedure. In the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, however, there was a single list of questions and the State party's representative was invited to reply to all of them, with members posing additional questions on any of them afterwards. In other committees, there was no preliminary list and the questions of the experts could touch on all the articles of the Convention concerned.

69. Ms. ILIC asked how the attention of the Human Rights Committee could be drawn to the fact that a Government might have entered a reservation to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women but no reservation to the equivalent article in the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

70. Ms. KLEIN (Centre for Human Rights) said that, in future, the Secretariat would try to bring any reservations under other treaties to the attention of the Human Rights Committee, although it would be for the Committee to decide whether to take up the matter.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.